

#GetLifelongReady

NUTRITION AND HYDRATION TIPS



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Eating and drinking the right stuff is important when we are starting an activity for the first time, or getting back into it after a break. There is so much information and so many technical terms that can be overwhelming to work out what the 'right stuff' is. QORF has prepared a few basic tips to help you make the right decisions to:

- Prepare for your activity
- Keep fueled during your activity
- Recover from your activity

Medical Disclaimer: Consult a Health Professional

Due care has been exercised in ensuring the accuracy of this material, however, as always you should consult with a healthcare professional before starting any diet or exercise program.

Nutrition and Physical Activity

- During physical activity, the body burns energy it gets from carbohydrates. Your body stores carbohydrates in our blood and muscles (called glycogen) - these come from the food and drinks we consume.
- Your body uses fats as energy after the body has used its glycogen stores.
- It is important to ensure you have enough carbohydrate (i.e. glycogen) in your body to ensure you can perform well for the hour or so of an activity and most of all - enjoy the experience.
- When you deplete your glycogen stores you may feel fatigued - for instance, you may experience tiredness, loss of concentration, reduced tolerance and a greater chance of becoming irritable.

Eating to prepare for an activity

- Eating a small carbohydrate-based meal, or some snacks, before your activity will ensure you have carbohydrate stores ready to use. This will also ensure you feel more positive, more settled in the stomach, and less susceptible to feeling hungry during your activity.
- Pasta, bread, potatoes, cereal, muesli bars, or other carbohydrates are good choices. Avoid foods high in fibre, fats or proteins as these foods need more time to be digested and may cause stomach-aches if not properly digested in time.
- Timing of meals or snacks will depend on your body. Current research indicates you should eat one to four hours before your activity - this provides enough time to digest food in preparation for activity.

Eating to recover

- Your body can take up to 24 hours to fully recover from physical activity (including replenishing carbohydrate stores, replacing fluids lost, repairing muscle damage, etc).
- To aid this recovery, it is important to eat a carbohydrate-based meal or snack within one hour of finishing activity. Add some good quality protein to your post-exercise snack to help your body start rebuilding the proteins used by working muscles.
- Examples of carbohydrate-protein foods include: Cereal and milk, meat and salad sandwich, a peanut butter sandwich, a smoothie (with milk or yoghurt), fresh fruit and yoghurt, a small bowl of spaghetti bolognese, lasagne and fresh salad, egg of toast, a glass of milk (250mL).
- For the next day, it is important to attend to your body's needs mindfully - manage your fluid intake, and return to a normal eating pattern of nutritious snacks and meals to ensure a smooth recovery.



Hydration and Physical Activity

- During physical activity, the body sweats fluid to cool itself down - in addition to using fluid for normal bodily functions - this means when you are exercising you need to drink more water otherwise you will become dehydrated.
- Dehydration (lack of fluid) can cause fatigue - for instance, you may experience reduced blood volume, meaning you have less blood transporting oxygen to your muscles, you may have less fluid available to form sweat to cool the body, and a greater chance of overheating. All of these outcomes influence your performance in your activity and your overall enjoyment.

Fluid intake to prepare for, and participate in, an activity

- To prepare for your activity:
 - One to two hours before your activity, you should drink 400-600mL of fluid, with a further 200-400mL just before you start your activity.
 - Water is the best choice before activity - avoid things like coffee, tea, alcohol and sugary drinks before activity as they will dehydrate your body.
- During your activity:
 - Consume fluids regularly - aim for one cup of fluid, or 250mL, every 15 minutes.
 - Do not wait until you feel thirsty - this is a sign your body is already becoming dehydrated.
 - Consume fluid which is cool, flavoured, and contains salts (i.e. sodium). Sports drinks are a good option - alternate sips of water and a sports drink during activity.

Drinking to recover from activity

- After activity, your body may continue to sweat for 2-6 hours - depending on your body, your environment and your level of exertion. It is important you continue to rehydrate your body during this time.
- Continue to sip on sports drinks, water and eat a healthy balanced meal or snack after you have exercised.
- Pay close attention to your level of thirst - in warm weather, you might need to drink several litres of fluid to rehydrate.
- Continue to rehydrate your body until your regular pattern of urination resumes.



